

Catalogue
of an Exhibition of a
Selection of
Etchings
By
Rembrandt

With an Introduction by
David Keppel

Frederick Keppel & Co.

4 East 39th Street

New York

November 7th to November 30th, 1907

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INTRODUCTION

ONE is almost tempted to say that etching came more naturally to Rembrandt than painting, because unquestionably a student of our day finds much greater pleasure in the paintings done toward the close of Rembrandt's career than in those of his earlier years, while in the case of the etchings, although his earlier and later styles are very different, one can not say that the early plates are not in their way quite as beautiful as the later ones.

In studying the work of any artist it is well to distinguish between those subjects which it paid him to produce and those which he lost both time and money in producing. It seems probable that the etchings of Rembrandt belong almost entirely to the latter class and that his work in etching was much less influenced by the thought of public approval than his work in painting. In etching his marvelous freedom must have seemed very rough and sketchy to a public brought up on the traditions of Schongauer, Dürer, and the Little Masters, and it is probable that the vast majority of his plates were done more to please himself than to please the public.

Of the three main classes of Rembrandt's etched work—the Scriptural pieces, the

portraits and the landscapes—the Scriptural pieces were at that time the most fashionable and it is probable that Rembrandt's plates of such subjects paid him better on the whole than any of the others. Some of his very greatest plates were Biblical subjects and the greatest of all, the *Hundred Guilders' Print*, comes into this class. It was a deeply religious era and the Biblical prints were just as true an expression of the feeling of the time as the more frivolous subjects were an expression of the feeling of the eighteenth century. Even among the Scriptural plates it is probable that no roughly done etching such as the *Sacrifice of Abraham*, or the *Triumph of Mordecai*, or *Tobit Blind*, was done to please the public. If that had been what Rembrandt had in mind he would probably have employed a much more careful style. The plates which one suspects of being concessions to public opinion are those large subjects which Rembrandt began but which seem unquestionably to have been finished by his pupils to satisfy the popular taste, such plates as the great *Ecce Homo* (*Bartsch No. 77*), and *The Descent from the Cross* (*Bartsch No. 81*). It would obviously have been madness to think of pleasing the popular taste of the time with such a plate as *The Three Crosses* or *Christ at Emmaus*. On the other hand we know (from its traditional name of the *Hundred Guilders' Print*) that the plate of *Christ Healing the Sick* was as greatly beloved then as it is now and it is a work of such astounding force and

truth that one has only to look at it to see that it is a work of direct inspiration.

Every one knows that much of the greatest work of any man is produced under the spur of necessity, but it is perhaps stating it fairly to say that while a picture of a subject which is in fashion at the time *may* be a great and inspired work, it may also be a "pot-boiler," while a portrait of a poor member of the artist's family or a subject of a class which is decidedly out of fashion can only have been done because the artist loved to do it and felt himself inspired at just that moment to do just that subject.

The portraits of great people may have been done for money but certainly were not always done for that reason. Material considerations had nothing to do with the loving care with which Rembrandt executed the portrait of Jan Six, who was perhaps his best friend in the world, and a portrait of such a comparatively unimportant man as Jan Lutma must clearly have been done for love and as in the case of the *Hundred Guilders' Print* one has only to look at the portrait to see that it is so.

Finally, the landscape etchings are so supremely beautiful, so spontaneous, and so marvelously ahead of Rembrandt's time that it is obvious that they must have been done simply for his own satisfaction and because, in fact, he could not help doing them.

DAVID KEPPEL.

November 7th, 1907.

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CATALOGUE

- 1 **Rembrandt with a Scarf.** (Bartsch No. 17)
Dated 1633. The third state of five, before the gray spots appeared on the hat and over the left eye.

- 2 **Rembrandt Drawing.** (Bartsch No. 22)
Dated 1648. Proof with the landscape seen through the window, but before the back of the large book was divided in two by a horizontal shadow, making it appear like two thinner books placed one on top of the other.
Superb impression. Duplicate from the Berlin public collection and also from the Thiermann and Ellingwood collections.

- 3 **Abraham Entertaining the Three Angels.** (Bartsch No. 29)
Dated 1656. The only state.

- 4 **Abraham sending away Hagar.** (Bartsch No. 30)
Dated 1637. The only state. Wide margin.
"All the qualities of Rembrandt are united to a high degree in this print: beauty of expression, arrangement, delicacy, richness of detail, and chiaroscuro." Charles Blanc.
"This is one of the most perfectly delicate of all Rembrandt's etchings. The sureness of the faint, thin lines on which the expression of the face chiefly depends, the masterly reservation of reflections and half-lights in open shading, the opportune omission of labor where omission was better than toil, justify our admiration."
P. G. Hamerton: *Etching and Etchers*, pages 82-83.

- 5 **Abraham's Sacrifice.** (Bartsch No. 35)
Dated 1655. The only state.
"By its grandeur and originality of invention and composition it may well take rank as one of Rembrandt's finest plates."
"Independently of its very fine composition, and the magnificent style in the drawing of *Abraham and the Angel*, this plate may be easily recommended as a fine example of the free etched line which is everywhere perfectly frank and full of vital energy." P. G. Hamerton.

- 6 **Joseph Relating His Dream.** (Bartsch No. 37)
Dated 1638. Early impression before the almost vertical shading on the table-top.

- 7 **The Triumph of Mordecai.** (Bartsch No. 40)
Assumed date 1640.

8 **Tobit Blind.**

(Bartsch No. 42)

Dated 1651. Early impression before the plate was entirely cleaned.

"There are a few remarkably good etchings of 1651. First the wonderfully delicate little print of *The Blind Tobit*, the most striking and affecting picture of the helplessness of a man struck blind." Knackfuss: *Rembrandt*, page 118.

". . . one of his most touching biblical illustrations *Tobit Blind, with the Dog*, a work in which the mental conception, which is most pathetic, is everything, and the manual performance so simple, so devoid of all pretension, that it requires some knowledge of etching to recognize the strength of the master."

P. G. Hamerton: *Etchings of Rembrandt*, page 44.

9 **Angels Announcing the Birth of Christ.** (Bartsch No. 44)

Dated 1634. The effect of this print almost entirely depends upon the clearness of the nocturne landscape in the distance to the left.

"These great scenes from the Bible, no one has conceived them better than Rembrandt, and no one felt more keenly their touching and simple poetry. *The Apparition of the Angels to the Shepherds* has been the subject of many pictures; but how often does one rest indifferent to the representations of this marvelous scene! Rembrandt finds here occasion to show the two most astounding sides of his genius; expression and chiaroscuro."

Charles Blanc.

"The effect of this superb print is wonderful. Fine impressions of it are rare."

Bartsch.

10 **The Adoration of the Shepherds.** (Bartsch No. 46)

Assumed date 1652. An extremely fine rich impression in the finished state.

11 **The Flight into Egypt; A Night Piece.** (Bartsch No. 53)

Dated 1651. Extremely fine impression. It is from the collection of Sir Seymour Haden and bears his autograph at the back.

12 **Flight into Egypt; The Holy Family Crossing a Rill.**

(Bartsch No. 55)

Dated 1654. The only state. Early impression on white paper.

"La Vierge, appuyant sa main sur sa selle, penche la tête d'une air triste; la précaution du vieillard qui sond l'eau avec son bâton, est exprimée d'une manière saisissante; l'âne est un petit chef-d'œuvre de dessin et de gravure. Si cette petite estampe était rare, on la paierait des prix énormes, tant elle est charmante."

Charles Blanc.

13 **The Same.**

Another impression on yellowish paper, with margin.

14 **The Rest in Egypt. In outline.** (Bartsch No. 58)

Dated 1645. This impression bears the stamps of two collections, neither of which is known to Fagan. The impressions of this charming little print are always very faint and delicate.

Reproduced in Charles Blanc's catalogue of Rembrandt's Etchings.

15 **The Return from Jerusalem** (Bartsch No. 60)

Dated 1654. Early impression, full of burr.

16 **Christ Preaching.** (Bartsch No. 67)

Assumed date 1635. The only state. Superb impression in rich black ink on white paper. Wide margin.

"Though less important than the *Hundred Guilders' Print*, the *Christ Preaching* is certainly as strong as, if not stronger than, its great companion in its drawing of human character. The profound attention of the assembly, the marvelous expressions of their faces as they listen to the words of Christ, make an impression upon us that cannot be forgotten, and we are as if we ourselves were there listening to what the great Preacher has to say."

Atherton Curtis.

17 **The Same.**

Another impression, on yellow paper. This impression, although not so fine as the preceding, has still got the burr on the right sleeve of the figure in the left foreground and also the burr on the corner of the building in the upper right hand corner. This burr disappears in all but the earliest impressions.

18 **Christ and the Tribute Money.** (Bartsch No. 68)

Assumed date 1635. The first state of three, before the shade on the turban of the foremost figure. From the collections of Amboise Firmin-Didot and Louis Galichon.

19 **The Raising of Lazarus.** The Smaller Plate.

(Bartsch No. 72)

Dated 1642. The first state of three, with three little strokes behind the head of Lazarus.

20 **Christ Healing the Sick.** (Bartsch No. 74)

Known as the *Hundred Guilders' Print*.

Assumed date 1650. This is usually conceded to be the greatest of Rembrandt's etchings. Superb impression on Japan paper, with margin. The second state of six. Only eight impressions are known of the first state.

"Ce n'est pas pour rien que ce morceau est si célèbre dans le monde, . . . , car vraiment tout y est sublime, la mise en scène, la combinaison des lignes, la vérité et la variété des expressions, les prestiges de la lumière et de l'ombre, et enfin l'exécution, dont la finesse ne le cède point ici à la profondeur même du sentiment. . . .

"Les plus croyants, les plus fervents sont ceux qui approchent le plus de la personne du Christ; à mesure que les groupes s'éloignent du centre de la composition, les manifestations de la foi deviennent moins vives. Mais que de délicatesse et de vérité dans ces nuances! le discours peut à peine les rendre: la pointe de Rembrandt les fait sentir. Jamais la peinture a-t-elle rencontré, je le demande, des physionomies plus profondément humaines que celle de cette vieille femme, aux bras décharnés, aux mains sillonnées de rides, qui crie la douleur,

et supplie avec tant d'âme pour la guérison de sa fille couchée à ses pieds? . . .

"Faut-il parler maintenant de l'exécution magique de cette gravure? Mais à quoi bon faire ressortir ce qui est de nature à frapper si vivement tous les yeux? L'esprit de Rembrandt est dans chaque trait; il se révèle dans les moindres nuances d'un travail, tantôt précieux, tantôt vif et rapide. Le procédé ne fait qu'obéir ici aux délicatesses du sentiment. La pointe est conduite, non par la main, mais par le cœur."

Charles Blanc.

21 The Same.

Another splendid impression. Printed on white Holland paper, with wide margin.

22 The Three Crosses.

(Bartsch No. 78)

Dated 1653. Superb impression of the first state of five. Printed on vellum, which has acquired a wonderful rich ivory tone. This is probably the finest impression of the print in the world, having been pronounced by a famous expert to be much finer than the one in the print room of the British Museum.

"When Rembrandt had passed his fiftieth year he seems to have put still more fire into his painting, and to have worked with even greater breadth of handling; and there was a corresponding change in his style of etching. His biblical subjects appear like weird visions wrapped in mysterious light: witness his powerful crucifixion known as *The Three Crosses*." Lippmann: *Engraving and Etching*, page 174.

23 The Entombment.

(Bartsch No. 86)

The first state, in which the subject is treated almost in outline. The print in this state is of the utmost rarity. It is very seldom that it is seen outside of the great public collections.

24 The Same.

Impression in the second state, in which the whole plate has been carefully worked up to give the effect of a night scene. A superb example of Rembrandt's dark manner.

25 The Same.

Another impression in the second state, but more heavily inked, giving a very dark and gloomy effect.

26 Christ at Emmaus.

(Bartsch No. 87)

Dated 1634. Brilliant impression of the second state, from the Artaria collection.

"A number of masterly works in etching are dated 1634. Above all there is the print doubly attractive on account of the charming simplicity of the design, which repeats with new artistic beauty the subject, which the master already so often handled, of the manifestation of *The Redeemer at Emmaus*."

Knackfuss: *Rembrandt*, page 128.

27 The Same.

Another very brilliant impression, on yellowish paper, from the Boerner collection.

- 28 **Peter and John at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple.** (Bartsch No. 94)
 Dated 1659. Beautiful impression of the second state of five, on paper watermarked with the "Head of Folly."
- 29 **St. Jerome Writing at the Foot of a Tree.** (Bartsch No. 103)
 Dated 1648. Beautiful impression with margin.
- 30 **The Same.**
 A second impression, on paper watermarked with the "Head of Folly." From the collection of Dr. Sträter.
- 31 **St. Jerome in an Italian Landscape.** (Bartsch No. 104)
 Assumed date 1653.
 "Rembrandt a traité bien des fois ce sujet de Saint Jérôme. mais jamais avec plus de grandeur ni d'une façon plus heureuse."
 Charles Blanc.
- 32 **The Star of the Kings.** (Bartsch No. 113)
 Assumed date 1652. The only state.
- 33 **The Shell.** ; (Bartsch No. 159)
 Dated 1650. Of the utmost rarity. Superb impression from the Alexander Beugo collection.
 "One day (in 1650) he sketches, in his roughest and most rapid manner *Christ in the Midst of his Disciples* and the next he sets himself to imitate, with the utmost patience, a beautiful sea-shell of a pattern presenting dark irregular reticulations; the plate is of the greatest interest as Rembrandt's most decided attempt at pure and simple imitation . . . and it is curious to see the great artist humbly giving himself this elementary lesson at the mature age of forty-three."
 P. G. Hamerton: *Etchings of Rembrandt*, page 43.
- 34 **Woman with Her Feet in the Water.** (Bartsch No. 200)
 Dated 1658. Superb proof on Japan paper. From the collection of Dr. Sträter, and also from two other collections not described by Fagan.

SPECIAL NOTE ON THE LANDSCAPE ETCHINGS

"IN landscape etching, Rembrandt holds a peculiar position in relation to his time. . . . He painted beautiful landscapes but they were less true to nature than those of many of his contemporaries. We can see in the works of the best painters of his time the foundations upon which the modern French school built, but we cannot see

this in Rembrandt. When, however, we turn to etching, the case is entirely different. Here Rembrandt stands out as an inexplicable phenomenon of his time. He had no predecessors, he had no contemporaries, and he had no successors until the nineteenth century brought forth its great men. He stands there in the seventeenth century a unique figure, and no one can say from whence came his art. He does not show a mere *tendency* toward nineteenth century landscape. He is as modern as the men of the nineteenth century themselves; and while he has had his equals in two or three of them, he remains to-day an unsurpassed 'modern among the moderns.' "

ATHERTON CURTIS.

"AFTER 1641, however, Rembrandt threw himself into etching with renewed energy, and at once found in landscape a new *milieu*, in which he won the most glorious triumphs of his art. To the ten years from 1641 to 1651 belong almost all the twenty-eight landscape etchings which can with certainty be ascribed to Rembrandt. They are pictures of his native surroundings, broad plains with a fine feeling of space and open air. Some cottages or a group of trees give a note of interest in the foreground, but from this the eye is drawn to the distant landscape wrapped in the soft sea-mists of the lowlands of Holland. So complete is his command of the etcher's craft, so delicate his perception of tone, so convincing the surety of his perspective, that we forget that we have only black and white before our eyes; the prints seem to express everything that a finished painting in color could supply."—LIPPMANN, *Engraving and Etching*, page 171.

SIR SEYMOUR HADEN ingeniously points out that nearly all of Rembrandt's landscapes were etched during the sad and solitary years immediately after the master had lost his beloved first wife, Saskia.

- 35 **A View of Omval.** (Bartsch No. 209)
 Beautiful impression of the first state of four. Before the shading due to the use of sulphur was cleaned from the background of the plate and before the trial scratches in the upper right hand corner were altered.
 From the collections of S. Bechberger, 1799, and Henri le Sec des Tournelles.
 Seymour Haden considers this the most beautiful of Rembrandt's landscapes.
- 36 **A View of Amsterdam.** (Bartsch No. 210)
 Assumed date 1641. The only state. Beautiful impression with wide margin, on paper watermarked with "Head of Folly."
- 37 **Landscape with the Milkman.** (Bartsch No. 214)
 Assumed date 1636. Of the utmost rarity.
- 38 **Landscape with a Man Sketching.** (Bartsch No. 219)
 Assumed date 1648.
- 39 **Le Bouquet de Bois.** (Bartsch No. 222)
 Dated 1652. Very fine impression of this extremely rare dry-point, from the François Debois collection. This impression received a slight fold in the press.
- 40 **Landscape with the Haybarn.** (Bartsch No. 225)
 Dated 1641. Beautiful impression from the Artaria collection, and another not described by Fagan. This print has always been considered one of Rembrandt's most beautiful landscapes.
- 41 **The Same.**
 Another impression, somewhat lighter in tone than the preceding.
- 42 **Landscape with a Mill Sail Seen Above a Cottage.** (Bartsch No. 226)
 Dated 1641. The only state. It is unfortunate that this landscape, which in composition was one of Rembrandt's finest, is usually dull and somewhat monotonous in tone. The present impression has quite an unusual amount of variety and life. On paper watermarked with the "Lilienwappen."
- 43 **Landscape with an Obelisk.** (Bartsch No. 227)
 Assumed date 1632. Impression full of burr and with the tone, obtained by the use of sulphur, very visible in the sky. From the collection of Prince Soutzo.
- 44 **The Same.**
 Another impression on paper watermarked with "Head of Folly."

- 45 **The Cottage with the White Palings.** (Bartsch No. 232)
 Dated 1632. Superb impression. Duplicate from the Amsterdam Museum. This is one of the most charming of Rembrandt's landscapes. The vivid white of the planks in the center of the dark part of this picture is an instance of his brilliant originality of composition. The trees are beautiful examples of his earlier manner of treating foliage in pure etching.. Later on when he came to use dry-point more in the treatment of trees, in such plates as the *Goldweigher's Field* and the *Flock of Sheep*, the foliage is quite different and is made up of a great number of stiff little strokes.
- 46 **The Same.** (Bartsch No. 232)
 Another impression on paper watermarked with "Head of Folly."
- 47 **The Mill.** (Bartsch No. 233)
 Dated 1641. Superb early impression, before any of the effect obtained in the sky by the use of sulphur was lost.
 "Here we see nothing but a wind-mill, a few houses and a perfectly flat horizon; but what a refined and indescribable charm—the secret of true art which defies analysis—lies in the sincerity with which this scene is rendered."
 Knackfuss: *Rembrandt*, page 85.
- 48 **Landscape with a Large Boat** (Bartsch No. 236)
 Dated 1650. Of the finest quality but cut about one eighth of an inch at the top, and re-margined. From the collections of Josef Comesina de Ponal, Josef Daniel Böhm and D. G. de Arozarena.
- 49 **Antonides van den Linden.** (Bartsch No. 264)
 Extremely fine impression in the finished state. From the Artaria collection.
- 50 **Clement de Jonghe.** (Bartsch No. 272)
 Dated 1651. Beautiful impression of one of the most famous of Rembrandt's portraits. From the Ellingwood collection.
 "As to the portrait of Clement de Jonghe which Rembrandt etched, one has no need to remark how fortunate is the arrangement or how beautiful the effect, how imposing the pensive expression of this personage whom one would so little suspect of being a merchant occupied with the prosaic details of his business and to whom Rembrandt—who always idealized nature according to his own ideas—has been able to give, as in the case of the *Young Haaring*, an air of revery so profound, and the austere melancholy of a philosopher in meditation."
 Charles Blanc.
 "Nothing in all the great etched work of Rembrandt is in craftsmanship more unobtrusively magnificent, and in its suggestion of complex character nothing is more subtle."
 Frederick Wedmore: *Fine Prints*, page 62.

- 51 **Jan Lutma.** (Bartsch No. 276)
 Dated 1656. Second state, before the curved shading on the window jamb in the upper right hand corner. Extremely fine impression, from the Ellingwood collection.
 "Rembrandt produced one of his most masterly portrait etchings in 1656, the incomparably picturesque and life-like print of the famous goldsmith, Janus Lutma of Groningen."
 H. Knackfuss: *Rembrandt*, page 137.
 "He" (Rembrandt) "admired nothing so much as a certain stern and manly grandeur resulting from the combination of the habits of reflection and much experience of the world."
 P. G. Hamerton.
- 52 **Jan Asselyn.** (Bartsch No. 277)
 Dated 1641. The second state of four, immediately after the easel was effaced from the background of the plate.
- 53 **Johannes Wtenbogardus.** (Bartsch No. 279)
 Splendid impression of the completed plate, but before the crude retouches on the curtain at the right.
- 54 **Jan Sylvius.** (Bartsch No. 280)
 Dated 1646. This portrait is one of Rembrandt's very greatest works. It is unfortunately very scarce and is only to be found in a few of the oldest and most famous collections.
- 55 **Utenbogaerd, the Gold Weigher.** (Bartsch No. 281)
 Dated 1639. Superb impression of the second state of four. The face of the gold weigher is still a blank in the first state, which exists only in four or five impressions.
- 56 **Young Man in a Mezetin Cap.** (Bartsch No. 289)
 Assumed date 1635.
- 57 **Man with a Broad Hat and a Ruff.** [Bartsch No. 311]
 Dated 1630. Beautiful impression from the collections of Herman Weber and Dr. Sträter. This portrait was among Rovinski's favorites, he speaks of it as "cette superbe feuille."
- 58 **Saskia with the Head-dress of Pearls.** (Bartsch No. 347)
 Dated 1634.



